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Cindy Nguy

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SCU IN QUARANTINE

Our Pandemic Stories

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The Baby Bump Nobody Saw

Cindy Nguy

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During the apocalypse dress rehearsal that was 2020, most of my year was spent pregnant. Being highly risk averse, I went nowhere and saw no one. Very few people witnessed my growing belly, and even fewer have met my seven-month-old baby boy in person. Still.

The year started out with good news about Baby's imminent arrival. But as we entered spring, bits of fear, sadness, stress, and anger would wear down my happiness and excitement. Plans fell apart, one after another, as the pandemic grew more serious and we were sheltering in place indefinitely.

Babymoon in Spain—no way. Trips to the baby store to pick up the million cute little things Baby will need—nope, we're sheltering in place. My mom (in her 70s) coming to California from the east coast to welcome Baby to the world—heck NO, not happening. That was time I could have had with my mom as I was becoming a new mom. Time together that we haven't had since I'd moved away seven years ago.

I went to ultrasounds alone since my partner wasn't allowed there. The doctors felt bad, so they OK'd FaceTime. With my mask on, I held the phone at just the right angle for my husband to see the screen. After 15 minutes locked in that position, all I could feel were pins and needles in my arm. My breath from the imperfectly sealed mask was fogging up my glasses. I could barely see Baby-to-be on the screen. This special moment with my husband "should've" been in person. Tears started streaming down my face. The technician didn't know how to comfort me, so I passed them off as tears of joy seeing Baby in the ultrasound.

As if angst over the pandemic were not enough, intensified anxiety and anger were just blossoming out of me by the late spring and summer. The fear for my Black husband's safety was always in the back of my mind (and sometimes scarily at the forefront of my mind). But, now I have my baby boy to worry about, too. Seemingly everyone was now talking about BLM—some supportive and others hateful. The empathy was encouraging, but in the end, people speaking out wasn't going to make my husband and son bulletproof.

Staying healthy and positive are important during pregnancy, and it sure was hard. What really kept me hopeful was the outpouring of kindness from some of the most kind, caring, and generous people, who I'm so fortunate to have in my life. Homemade food, care packages, sage advice from mommy friends, and so many gifts for Baby were delivered to us—it touches my heart thinking about their care for us and how Baby was so loved before he even came to this world.

So, how's 2021 going? We're thankfully climbing out of quarantine. But does anyone know how to leave the house with a baby without having to pack 200 things?

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